Reang Refugees in Tripura

3425. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Reang families of Mizoram who have taken shelter in North Tripura district;

(b) since how long they have been staying in Tripura as refugees;

(c) why the Reang families have to take shelter in Tripura; and

(d) what steps have been taken by the Central Government for their repatriation to their home State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) According to information received from the Government of Tripura, 31261 Reang refugees are presently taking shelter in camps in Tripura.

(b) The Reang refugees from Mizoram had come to Tripura during the period October/November, 1997 to February/March, 1998.

(c) The Reang refugees took shelter in Tripura due to ethenic tension between the Mizos and the Reangs following certain acts of violence in Mizoram.

(d) The Central Goernment has been urging the Government of Mizoram to ensure that the ethnic tension in the State is kept under control and thus the displaced tribals are taken back after ensuring their safety. A series of meetings involving the Central Government, Government of Tripura and Government of Mizoram were held in Delhi to resolve the issue. A tripartite meeting involving the Central Government, Government of Mizoram and representatives of Reang refugees was also held in Aizawl. Additional Police deployment was made in the affected areas. A sum of Rs. 1975.44 lakhs has so far been made available to the Government of Tripura for maintenance of the displaced Reang tribals. Another amount of Rs. 5 lakhs has also been provided to the Government of Assam for the purpose.

A National Human Rights Commission team also visited the refugee camps and recommended, *inter-alia*, that the Government of Mizoram should take back the Reang refugees from Mizoram. The matter has been taken up again with the Government of Mizoram.